Agenda item: 1

Staff person handling: Jim Lynch, Director

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Approve minutes**

Background
Staff presents the following minutes for review and approval:

1. March 1, 2006
2. March 6, 2006 telephone meeting

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 2

Staff person handling: Sandra Straehl – Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator

Date/location: April 13, 2006, in Helena, MT

Item: **Locally funded construction project on National Highway System**
JP Road/US 93 Signalization – City of Whitefish

Background
Under M.C.A. 60-2-111 ("letting of contracts on state and federal aid highways") any reconstruction or construction project located on a designated highway or a state highway, must be let to contract by the Transportation Commission. This includes those projects on designated or state highways within cities and towns. This statue exists to ensure safety of our system, protect transportation investments, and encourage better coordination between state and local infrastructure improvements. MDT staff reaches out to local governments twice each year in March and October, to solicit local projects on state systems to ensure compliance with this statute.

Summary
The city of Whitefish is planning to design and build a transportation improvement project on the Federal National Highway System. The Whitefish project will be funded with a locally funded Special Improvement District (SID) and city funds, using contract labor. The project has been under Systems Impacts Review under the name *JP Road/US 93 Signalization* project for signalization of the intersection and extension to the west to accommodate new development.

The city of Whitefish and MDT have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the terms of construction phasing for the signalization part of the project. MDT plans to allow the city to construct the underground signal components as part of the JP Road SID project. Once the signal meets warrants, the city will be allowed to complete the above ground construction of the signal (poles, signal housings and control cabinet). MDT will then activate the signal and assume maintenance responsibility at that time.

The local government has conducted a public involvement process consisting of a public meeting. In general, the public supports this project. Listed below is the location, scope, estimated cost, and type of labor used for the proposed project. The project location is indicated on the attached map.

As the project is on the National Highway System, the project will be designed with input and concurrence from MDT staff. On behalf of Whitefish, as required by M.C.A. 60-2-111, planning staff is requesting that the Transportation Commission delegate authority to Whitefish to let and award the contract for the project listed below.

Location	*Type of Work*	*Cost (estimated)*	*Year*	*Type of Labor*
Junction US 93 (N-5) and JP Road	Signalization, curb and gutter, and pavement	$200,000	2006	Contract

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends the commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer the contract for this project to Whitefish pending concurrence of MDT's Chief Engineer.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 3

Staff person handling: Sandra Straehl – Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Urban Bridge Rehabilitation**
Scott Street Overpass – Missoula

Background
MDT is requesting Commission approval for the addition of a bridge rehabilitation project into the program. Thirty years ago, the City of Missoula constructed the Scott Street bridge at RP 0.47 on Scott Street (U8109). According to an interlocal agreement between the city and county, bridge maintenance was assigned to Missoula County. During the most recent annual inspection, the county noted an accelerated deterioration of the concrete deck. It was determined several factors contributed to the delamination:

- The composite nature of the center deck span, concrete over steel beam.
- Poor quality control during initial construction.
- The use of chloride based de-icing agents.

The scope of the project includes removing the existing wear surface down to below the top row of steel in the deck, cleaning of the steel and replacement of any damaged components, and then restoring the wear surface with a high strength epoxy concrete.

The local officials of the Missoula Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC) and the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) have approved adding this Urban Highway System bridge rehabilitation project using $1.7 million Surface Transportation Program Urban (STPU) and High Growth funding. This project is in the approved *2005-2007 Missoula Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP).

Missoula receives an annual allocation of approximately $1.8 million STPU and $670,000 High Growth funding and has a combined FFY 2006 balance of approximately $4.7 million.

MDT will administer this project throughout.

Summary
The Scott Street Overpass is in need of rehabilitation to extend its useful life. The Missoula TPCC and TTAC have approved $1.7 million of STPU and High Growth funds for this project and have included this project in their approved 2005-2007 Missoula TIP. The estimated total project cost is $1.7 million which consists of $100,000 for preliminary engineering, $1,342,000 for construction and $258,000 for construction engineering.

Staff recommendations
Staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of this project to the program.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 4

Staff person handling: Sandra Straehl – Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator

Date/location: April 13th, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Flathead County CTEP projects on MDT Right-of-Way**
East Evergreen Sidewalk – Kalispell
Sam Bibler Memorial Trail – Kalispell

Background
The Commission approves Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) projects that are located on or adjacent to state designated streets and roads. The following CTEP projects are funded with the enhancement set-aside of the Surface Transportation Program that is allocated by population to Montana local and tribal governments. The communities select projects for funding with their allocations and provide required non-federal match. The program is based on an agreement between MDT and Montana local and tribal governments. Projects proposed for addition to the program are shown below:

1. **East Evergreen Sidewalk – Kalispell**
   This enhancement project will design and construct approximately 5940 lineal feet of 6 foot-wide concrete sidewalk. The sidewalk will provide a link between East Evergreen Elementary and Evergreen Junior High School. The sidewalk will run parallel to East Evergreen Drive (U6710) between Helena Flats Road (U6712) and LaSalle Road (P-1). The project begins at the intersection with Helena Flats Road within the public right-of-way and extends east to the intersection with US HWY 2 (P-1).

   The estimated total project costs are $400,000, which consists of $15,000 for preliminary engineering, $370,000 for construction, and $15,000 for construction engineering.

   Including this project, Flathead County will have obligated $2,830,725 of the $2,950,260 made available through the CTEP program.

2. **Sam Bibler Memorial Trail – Kalispell**
   This enhancement project will design and construct approximately 10,560 lineal feet of 8 foot-wide pedestrian/bicycle pathway. The path will run parallel to Willow Glen Drive (U-6734/S-317). The project begins at the intersection of US HWY 93 (N-5) and extends north to the intersection of Conrad Lane. The project will be sited on existing public right-of-way as well as on privately donated easements. The preliminary planning and design engineering will involve determining easement and/or right-of-way needs.

The estimated total project costs are $200,000, which consists of $40,000 for preliminary engineering, $155,000 for construction, and $5,000 for construction engineering.

Including this project, Flathead County will have obligated $3,003,885 of the $2,950,260 made available through the CTEP program. Funding currently available to the CTEP program includes federal allocations only through FFY 2004, with the FFY 2005 allocation awaiting federal information regarding the STP enhancement set-aside. In the event that the FFY 05 allocation is not available on or before the Commission's approval to add the project to the program, the request to obligate funds for this project will be administratively held until the FFY 05 allocation is available.

Summary
All work will be in accordance with current design standards and ADA requirements.

Staff recommendations
Staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these projects to the program, with the provision that the second project will not proceed to programming before FFY 2005 CTEP allocations are disbursed.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 5

Staff person handling: Sandra Straehl – Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program – Missoula District**

Background
MDT is requesting commission approval for capital improvements to various state secondary roads within the Missoula District. Project nominations for the Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program were requested from the nine counties in the Missoula District and the Missoula District Administrator. The county commissioners from these nine counties approved the new priority list for the program by a majority vote. Powell County and Sanders County were unavailable when the vote was taken, but they were contacted prior to the voting and did not object.

Upon approval from the Transportation Commission, priorities 1 and 2 can move forward. The priority list is noted on attachment #1 and the county concurrence of the list is on attachment #2.

Summary
The priority projects from the **2006 Missoula District Secondary Roads Priority List** are:

1. S-203, RP 5.45 – 10.2, **Eastside Highway**, Ravalli County
   Reconstruction of paved surface. Estimated total project cost is $6.375 million.

2. S-317, RP 1.02 – 3.2, **Willow Glen/Conrad Drive**, Flathead County
   Reconstruction of paved surface. Estimated total project cost is $4.02 million.

3. S-263, RP 5.5 – 10.6, **Mullan Road**, Missoula County
   Reconstruction of paved surface. Estimated total project cost is $6.946 million.

4. S-292, RP 0.0 – 3.0, **Whitefish Stage Road**, Flathead County (MDT request)
   Reconstruction of paved surface. Estimated total project cost is $3.956 million.

5. S-472, RP 10.39 – 15.4, **Blue Slide Road**, Sanders County
   Reconstruction of paved surface. Estimated total project cost is $6.555 million.

6. S-211, RP 0.0 – 9.762, **Round Butte Road**, Lake County
   Minor rehabilitation of paved surface. Estimated total project cost is $3.32 million.

7. S-482, RP 3.36 – 7.16, **Farm to Market Road**, Lincoln County
   Reconstruction of paved surface. Estimated total project cost $5.055 million.

8. S-348, RP 7.1 – 14.298, **Rock Creek Road**, Granite County
   Major rehabilitation of paved surface. Estimated total project cost $2.46 million.

The new projects will be programmed for preliminary engineering when funding becomes available for the Missoula District Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program. Priorities 1 and 2 can move forward upon approval from the Transportation Commission.

Staff recommendations
Staff recommends the commission approve the above projects to the program.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 6

Staff person handling: Sandra Straehl – Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Major rehabilitation to Secondary 574, Frenchtown Frontage Road**
Missoula County

Background
MDT is requesting Commission approval for capital improvements to State Secondary Road 574 within Missoula County. At the January 25, 2006 commission meeting, the commission approved the addition of Frenchtown Frontage Road (Secondary 574) and the removal of Pattee Canyon Drive/Deer Creek Road (Secondary 533) from the Secondary Highway System.

Missoula County requested and received concurrence from the other eight Missoula District counties, the Secondary Roads Engineer and the Missoula District Administrator to substitute Frenchtown Frontage Road for the Deer Creek project on the **2000 Missoula District Secondary Roads Priority List**. The Deer Creek project was the last project on the **2000 Priority List** and has been closed. All of the projects on the **2000 Priority List** have been programmed. The county commissioners concurrence of the project substitution is included as attachment #1. Powell County and Sanders County were unavailable when the vote was taken but they were contacted prior to the voting and did not object.

Summary
The project is located north of I-90 from the intersection with US 93 near the DeSmet Interchange (RP 0) to the Huson Interchange (RP 10.96). The project preliminary scope of work will be major rehabilitation of the paved surface for 10.96 miles. The estimated total project costs are $4.03 million which includes $400,000 for preliminary engineering, $3.3 million for construction and $330,000 for construction engineering. The new project will be programmed for preliminary engineering for the Missoula District Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program.

Staff recommendations
Staff recommends the commission approve the above projects to the program.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 7

Staff person handling: Sandra Straehl – Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Informational items from Planning Division**

- **TranPlan 21 2005 Biennial Telephone and Stakeholder Survey Results**

  These surveys are part of MDT's formal public involvement process that is a federal requirement of the statewide transportation planning process. The survey results help identify changes in public and stakeholder opinions about Montana's transportation system, indicate new emerging issues, and track changes resulting from MDT policies, programs, and investments. Survey results are also compared with results from previous surveys beginning in 1994 to identify historic trends.

  Staff will present a brief summary of the 2005 survey results during the meeting.

- **Local Government Bonding – HB 451**

  House Bill 451, passed by the 59th Legislature, allows local governments within urban areas to use the GARVEE mechanism of the federal-aid program to bond for the construction of projects on the Urban Highway System. The intent of this legislation is to allow Urban Highway System improvements to proceed in a timely manner without disrupting other projects in the program.

  Through HB 451, local governments can issue bonds to fund federal-aid projects on the Urban Highway System that are payable from future federal-aid highway funds through the Montana Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) funding.

  The implementation date for this legislation is July 1, 2006. MDT staff is currently developing the financial management procedures, boiler-plate state-local agreement, and draft Transportation Commission policy to support this funding mechanism and will present this to the Commission prior to the July 1 implementation date.

Agenda item: 8

Staff person handling: Loran Frazier, Chief Engineer

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Speed limit studies**

Background
Staff has conducted speed limit studies on the following routes:

a. MT 37 – north of Eureka
b. US 2 – Harlem

Summary
The appropriate local government supports the special speed zone recommendations (see attached correspondence behind each speed limit report.)

Staff recommendations
Staff recommends the commission approve the special speed zones as presented.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Montana Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Memorandum

To: Loran Frazier, P.E. – Chief Engineer
Highways and Engineering Division

From: Duane E. Williams, P.E.
Traffic and Safety Engineer

Date: March 22, 2006

Subject: Speed Limit Recommendation for Commission Action
MT 37 – North of Eureka

- Lincoln County Commissioners requested a reduction in the 70 mph speed limit on MT 37, beginning approximately one mile west of the intersection with US 93 and continuing east towards Eureka. This roadway was last reconstructed in 1940. The typical section consists of two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with little or no surfaced shoulder area.

- The adjacent side culture is primarily rural with a few scattered residences. There is commercial development located along both the north and south sides of the roadway between the intersection with Osloski Road and the intersection with US 93.

- The 70 mph speed limit is not realistic for the travel speeds identified within this segment of MT 37. Available sight distance at two locations within the study area is not at the desired level for effective operation at 70 mph. The above average accident rate of 4.58 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled indicates that this segment of roadway is experiencing more conflicts than that typically associated with a rural primary route.

- In arriving at the following speed limits and the boundaries of each zone we looked at the relationships between the travel speeds, roadway design features and accident experience. The following recommendation was presented to Lincoln County Commissioners for comment. Their letter concurring with the proposed 60 mph and 50 mph speed limits is attached.

- **A 60 mph speed limit beginning at station 442+00, project FAP 137 B (600 feet west of the intersection with Airport Road) and continuing east to station 484+00, an approximate distance of 4,200 feet.**

- **A 50 mph speed limit beginning at station 484+00, project FAP 137 B (400 feet west of the intersection with Osloski Road) and continuing east to the intersection with US 93, an approximate distance of 1,400 feet.**

Report Submitted to Lincoln County

In conjunction with their request for a speed limit investigation on US 93, Lincoln County Commissioners also requested a reduction in the 70 mph speed limit on MT 37. They specified to have the speed limit reduction begin about one mile west of the intersection with US 93 and continue east towards Eureka. This portion of MT 37 was last reconstructed under project FAP 137 B in 1940. Maintenance forces have made surface improvements since then.

The typical section consists of two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with little or no surfaced shoulder area. The roadway's horizontal alignment is straight, while the vertical alignment is rolling in character. There are two prominent vertical curves that restrict sight distance. The first curve is located near the intersection with Airport Road. Intersection sight distance at this location is limited to 550 feet (50 mph design), and the available stopping sight distance is 500 feet (55 mph design). The next major change in the vertical alignment is at the intersection with Osloski Road. Intersection sight distance is limited to 600 feet (55 mph design), and stopping sight distance is limited to 550 feet (55 mph design).

The adjacent side culture is primarily rural with a few scattered residences. There is commercial development located along in both the north and south sides of the roadway between the intersection with Osloski Road and the intersection with US 93. The majority of this development is located near the intersection with US 93. Other features include a MDT maintenance yard located across from the intersection with Osloski Road. Average annual daily traffic volume is 1,845. There are no approved special speed limits on record for this segment of MT 37.

Accident History

The accident history was reviewed for a three-year period from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2005. During this period there were 12 accidents reported within the study area. The accident rate is 4.58 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled. This is above the statewide average of 1.45 accidents per million vehicle miles for rural state primary routes. The following table lists the accident types by location.

	Angle	Rearend	Single Vehicle	Other
Intersection	2		1	2
Non-Intersection		1	5	1

All six of the single vehicle accidents occurred along the rural segment between the intersection with Airport Road and the MDT maintenance yard. Adverse roadway conditions were listed as contributing factor in four of those accidents. Five of the six multiple vehicle accidents occurred within the 0.4-mile segment between milepost 66.5 and the milepost 66.9 (the intersection with US 93). All five of these accidents occurred during daylight hours on bare & dry roadway conditions. Both angle accidents, the rearend accident and a sideswipe accident involved eastbound traffic. There were no accidents reported at the intersection with US 93.

Travel Speeds

Vehicular travel speeds were sampled at five locations beginning 1,500 feet west of the intersection with Airport Road and continuing east to the intersection with US 93.

Location	85th Percentile Speed	Pace and Percentage
1,500 west of the intersection w/ Airport Road	67 mph Westbound 67 mph Eastbound	(55 mph – 65 mph) 46% (55 mph – 65 mph) 46%
400' east of the intersection w/ Airport Road	62 mph Westbound 63 mph Eastbound	(49 mph – 59 mph) 38% (52 mph – 62 mph) 32%
1,700' east of the intersection w/ Airport Road	62 mph Westbound 62 mph Eastbound	(46 mph – 56 mph) 46% (49 mph – 59 mph) 43%
1,000' east of the intersection w/ Osloski Road	63 mph Westbound 63 mph Eastbound	(49 mph – 59 mph) 45% (49 mph – 59 mph) 47%
900' east of the intersection w/ US 93	50 mph Westbound 53 mph Eastbound	(38 mph – 48 mph) 56% (41 mph – 51 mph) 43%

Both the 85th percentile speeds and the upper limit of the pace are typically 8 mph - 10 mph below the 70 mph speed limit within the majority of the study area. They further transition to 50 mph along the segment between the intersection with Osloski Road and the intersection with US 93.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this investigation indicate that this portion of MT 37 distinguishes itself from other rural primary routes in which the statutory 70 mph is intended for, and support Lincoln County's desire for a reduction in the speed limit. The 70 mph speed limit is not realistic successful in reflecting the actual travel speeds associated with this segment of MT 37. It also exceeds the operational capabilities of the roadway, as determined by the 85th percentile speeds. In addition to the travel speeds the available sight distance at two locations within the study area is not at desired level desired for effective operation at 70 mph. The above average accident rate indicates that this segment of roadway is experiencing more conflicts than that typically associated with a rural primary route. There is a natural reduction in the travel speeds approaching the intersection with US 93. This also corresponds with the area in which the majority of the multiple vehicle related conflicts occur.

It is our conclusion that this segment of the MT 37 would benefit from a reduction in the speed limit and therefore a special speed limit is justified. In order to reflect successful traffic operation for the roadway and operational characteristics identified from this investigation, we recommend the following 60 mph – 50 mph speed limit configuration. In arriving at the following speed zone boundaries we took into account the relationships between the travel speeds, roadway design features and accident experience.

A 60 mph speed limit beginning at station 442+00, project FAP 137 B (600 feet west of the intersection with Airport Road) and continuing east to station 484+00, an approximate distance of 4,200 feet.

A 50 mph speed limit beginning at station 484+00, project FAP 137 B (400 feet west of the intersection with Osloski Road) and continuing east to the intersection with US 93, an approximate distance of 1,400 feet.

Montana Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Memorandum

To: Loran Frazier, PE. – Chief Engineer
Highways and Engineering Division

From: Duane E. Williams, P.E.
Traffic and Safety Engineer

Date: March 21, 2006

Subject: Speed Limit Recommendation for Commission Action
US 2 – Harlem

Blaine County Commissioners have requested a reduction in the statutory 70 mph speed limit on the segment of US 2 that passes along the south side of Harlem. This area was last investigated in 2001. The main body of the community sets back away from the roadway with four access points leading into the community.

The accident history was reviewed for a three-year period. During this time frame there were eight accidents reported within the study area. The accident rate is 1.64 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled. This is above the statewide average of 1.24 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled for rural NHS routes. The accident statistics indicated that there is an over representation of the multiple vehicle accidents for a rural environment.

Based on the variation in the travel speeds, the general over representation of multiple vehicle accidents and the commercial development located within the central portion of the study area, we submitted a 60 mph speed limit recommendation to local officials with the boundaries of the zone beginning west of the intersection with 4th Street Southwest and continuing east 3,100 feet.

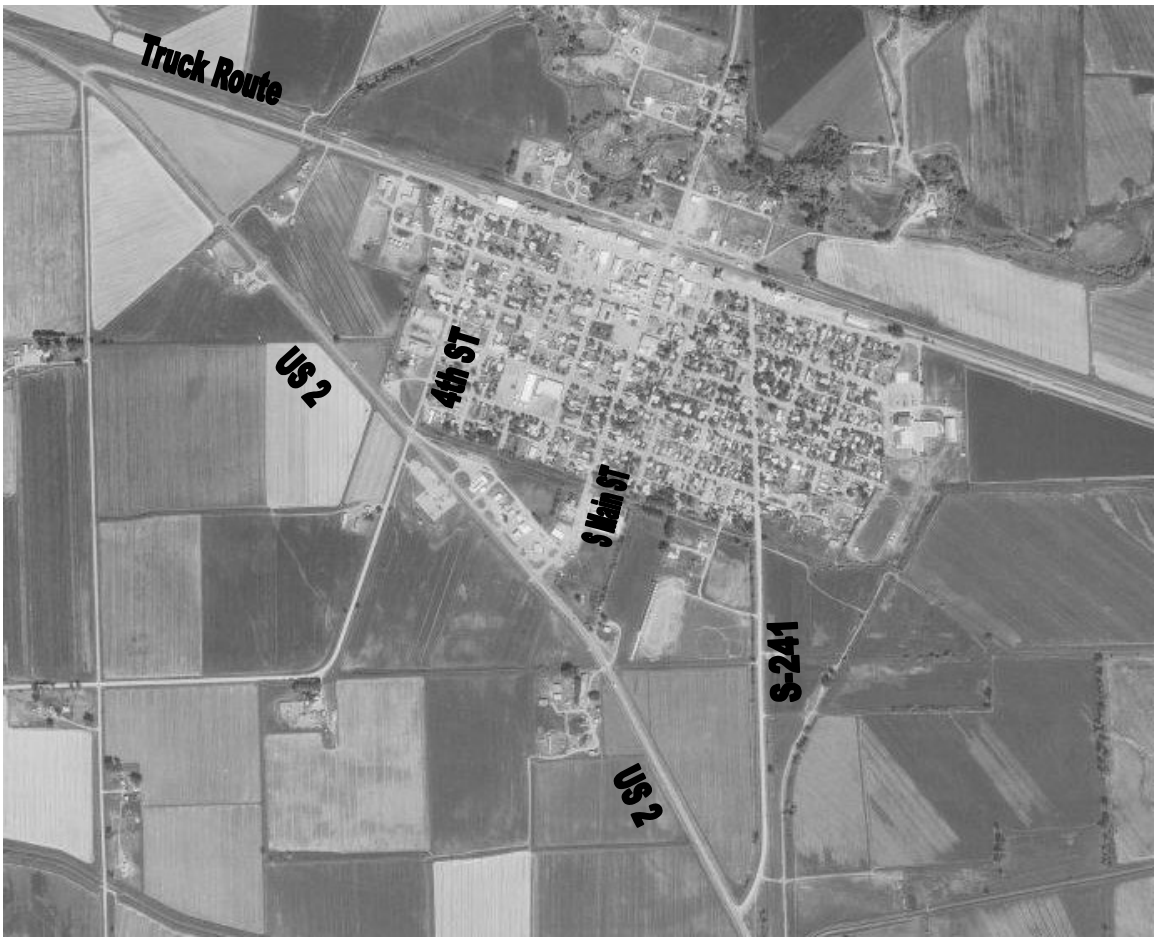
After reviewing this recommendation, County officials voiced their desire for a lower speed limit. Department staff met with locally elected officials to gather their views of traffic operation and the results of the engineering and traffic investigation. From that meeting the Department and County officials agreed upon the following 55 mph speed limit recommendation. With the support of Blaine County we are proposing the following 55 mph speed limit for the community of Harlem. Their letter concurring with this recommendation is attached.

A 55 mph speed limit beginning at station 237+00, project F 125(9) and continuing east to station 174+00, (100' east of the intersection with Water Plant Road) an approximate distance of 6,300 feet.

Report Submitted to Blaine County

This segment of US 2 was reconstructed under project F 152 (9) in 1968 and improved in 1986. The typical section consists of two 12-foot travel lanes and 7-foot shoulders in each direction. There is additional roadway width with shoulder bypass lanes for eastbound traffic at the intersections with South Main Street and Secondary 241. Intersection and stopping sight distance is good throughout the study area. The AADT along this portion of US 2 is 2010.

Harlem is located on the north side of US 2 with the main body of the community setting back away from the edge of the roadway. There are four main access points to the community. They are the Truck Route, 4th Street Southwest, South Main Street and Secondary 241. There is commercial development with direct access to US 2 located along the north side of the roadway between the intersections with 4th Street Southwest and South Main Street. Both the intersections with the Truck Route and Secondary 241 are located in a rural environment consisting of agricultural land. See aerial photograph of the study area.



Accident History

The accident history was reviewed for a three-year period from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2005. During this time frame there were eight accidents reported within the study area. The accident rate is 1.64 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled. This is above the statewide average of 1.24 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled for rural NHS routes. The following table lists the accident types by location.

	ANGLE	REAREND	SINGLE VEH.	OTHER
INTERSECTION	2	1	1	
NON-INTERSECTION		1	1	2

The accident experience was distributed throughout the study area. There are no definable trends that pinpoint a correctable condition. However, there is an over representation (75 percent) of the multiple vehicle accidents for a rural environment.

Travel Speeds

Vehicular travel speeds were sampled last September at eight locations beginning near the Truck Route west of Harlem. The following table lists the speed statistics by location.

Location	85th Percentile Speed	Pace & Percentage
600' east of Truck Route (Milepost 424.1)	70 mph Eastbound 74 mph Westbound	(58 mph – 68 mph) 46% (64 mph – 74 mph) 48%
1,700' east of Truck Route (Milepost 424.3)	72 mph Eastbound 72 mph Westbound	(58 mph – 68 mph) 44% (61 mph – 71 mph) 50%
300' west of 4th ST SW (Milepost 424.6)	70 mph Eastbound 69 mph Westbound	(58 mph – 68 mph) 40% (55 mph – 65 mph) 43%
900' east of 4th ST SW (Milepost 424.9)	69 mph Eastbound 65 mph Westbound	(52 mph – 62 mph) 29% (49 mph – 59 mph) 34%
300' east of S Main ST (Milepost 425.1)	65 mph Eastbound 61 mph Westbound	(37 mph – 47 mph) 35% (43 mph – 53 mph) 43%
1,600' east of S Main ST (Milepost 425.3)	69 mph Eastbound 70 mph Westbound	(55 mph – 65 mph) 47% (58 mph – 68 mph) 53%
200' west of Secondary 241 (Milepost 425.5)	71 mph Eastbound 73 mph Westbound	(58 mph – 68 mph) 50% (61 mph – 71 mph) 47%
1,100' east of Secondary 241 (Milepost 425.8)	73 mph Eastbound 67 mph Westbound	(61 mph – 71 mph) 42% (55 mph – 65 mph) 55%

The speed statistics indicate that there is a change in traffic operation that takes place in the area from the intersection with 4th Street Southwest to the intersection South Main Street. Both the 85th percentile speeds and the pace of the traffic stream were less than the statutory 70 mph speed limit, the pace in particular. The pace ranged from a low of (37 mph – 47 mph) to (52 mph – 62 mph).

It was also observed that the percentage of the traffic stream traveling within the pace was also less than that observed at other locations sampled. In addition to the variance in motorist perception in selecting a reasonable travel speed for the environment, we attribute this variation in the speeds statistics with the interaction between "local" traffic between the communities of Harlem and Fort Belknap Agency versus the through moving cross state traffic on US 2.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the variation in the travel speeds, the general over representation of multiple vehicle accidents and the commercial development located within the central portion of the study area,

we support local desires for a reduction in the 70 mph speed limit. Together these three features distinguish this segment of roadway from the adjacent areas to the east and west.

The pace of the traffic stream indicates that a large proportion of motorists are traveling significantly below the 70 mph speed limit and the prevailing 85th percentile speeds between the intersection with 4th Street Southwest and the intersection with South Main Street. This also corresponds with where the commercial development is located. The separation between the upper limit of the pace and the 85th percentile speeds observed in this area is not present within the remainder of the study area, and there is a smaller proportion of the traffic stream traveling within the pace. Both of these characteristics indicate additional uniformity in the travel speeds is desirable.

In arriving at the following 60 mph speed limit recommendation we looked at the results of the spot speed samples collected at stations four and five. The speed statistics did not single out an obvious choice for a speed limit other than that it should be less than 70 mph. It is our conclusion that 60 mph is the most logical choice taking into account the westbound 85th percentile speed of 61 mph at station 5 and the pace of (52 mph – 62 mph) eastbound and (49 mph – 59 mph) westbound at station 4.

A 60 mph speed limit beginning at station 222+00, project F 125(9) (300 feet west of the intersection with 4th Street Southwest) and continuing east to station 191+00, an approximate distance of 3,100 feet.

DCB:DRB:TRF:us2harlemrpt

attachments

cc: D.E. Williams
D. R. Bailey

Agenda item: 9

Staff person handling: Loran Frazier, Chief Engineer

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Letting lists**

Background
Staff will distribute the most current lists of upcoming projects slated for advertisement and bid letting.

Staff recommendations
Staff recommends approval of the letting lists.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 10

Staff person handling: Loran Frazier, Chief Engineer

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Certificates of completion**

Background
Attached are certificates of completion for February 2006.

Summary

Month	*Original contract amount (monthly total)*	*Final payment amount (monthly total)*
February 2006	$15,797,589	$16,272,798

Staff recommendation
Staff recommends approval.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 11

Staff person handling: Loran Frazier, Chief Engineer

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Project change orders**

Background
Attached are project change orders for January and February 2006.

Summary

Month	*Total*
January 2006	$68,704.15
February 2006	$14,510.09
	$83,214.24

Staff recommendation
Staff recommends approval.

Notes/discussion

Commission action

Agenda item: 12

Staff person handling: Jim Lynch, Director

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Educational presentation**

Background

Staff will present information on the following items:

2. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Project-Specific Agreements (PSAs)
3. What it takes to build a project
4. Secondary Roads

Notes/discussion

Agenda item: 13

Staff person handling: Jim Lynch, Director

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Commission discussion**

Notes/discussion

Agenda item: 14

Staff person handling: Jim Lynch, Director

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Public comment**

Notes/discussion

Agenda item: 15

Staff person handling: Jim Lynch, Director

Date/location: April 13, 2006 in Helena, MT

Item: **Schedule next commission meeting**

Background
At the beginning of the year, the commission set aside May 24 and 25 for a meeting in Helena.

The Governor's DES Summit has been scheduled for the week of May 22-25. From MDT's perspective, **May 25** would be preferred for a commission meeting.